



Photo courtesy of the Sergeant Major of the Army's Office.

Country music singer Mark Wills gets some support from Sergeant Major of the Army Jack Tilley May 15 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Wills and Tilley visited soldiers injured in Iraq and Kuwait.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack L. Tilley:

Train soldiers to stay alert, stay alive

In April, I visited soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. The conditions were rugged, harsh and challenging. Despite these hardships, the men and women faced the constant stress and dangers with a determination I wish everyone could see.

The threat of snipers, bombs, suicide attacks and ambushes make these missions extremely dangerous. The NCOs and soldiers I spoke with understood these hazards and were trained and prepared to handle it.

Being successful in these operations requires you to be alert and focused. The reason these soldiers remained confident was their training. They credited their sergeants for preparing them for the environment and continually communicating with them during these hard times.

It is critical that NCOs talk to their soldiers. Fear is to be expected but can be overcome by confidence in leadership, training, personal skills and equipment. That's why our sergeants play such a crucial role on the battlefield and the peacekeeping streets.

So as we publish the latest issue of your *NCO Journal*, I hope you continue to lead from the front, fight complacency and keep safety uppermost in your mind.

This quarter's publication takes a look at some great topics. I encourage you to read the articles and share them with your soldiers.

Our soldiers' successes today were set up during their initial entry training by some of the Army's best sergeants. The *NCO Journal* takes a look at the career benefits of being a drill sergeant. As a former drill sergeant, I will tell you it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my career.

Another timely article is about Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. We have activated more than 150,000 soldiers since 9/11 and could not get the job done without their efforts.

The *NCO Journal* is also providing you a user's guide to Army Knowledge Online and a great NCO online resource tool. There is also a spotlight article on the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. This institution has a long and proud tradition. It is unique to the armies of the world and helps set us apart.

I look forward to seeing many of you on my journeys in the coming months. I strongly encourage you to continue providing feedback to the *Journal* staff. We want to make this publication a useful tool for our corps.

*Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack L. Tilley
12th Sergeant Major of the Army*